

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00751 010525Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 NEA-10 EUR-12 H-02 /043 W
-----111218 010526Z /11

P 010304Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MEDAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2284

UNCLAS CANBERRA 0751

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC
SUBJ: MISSING YACHT CRUSADER

1. AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN ROBERT MCDONALD CALLED AT EMBASSY JAN 31 CONCERNING THE CRUSADER, A 51 FT YACHT MISSING SINCE NOV 16, 1977 IN THE BAY OF BENGAL. MCDONALD'S SON, GLENN R. MCDONALD WAS PASSENGER AT TIME BOAT DISAPPEARED. MR. MCDONALD SUPPLIED THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND DATA.

2. THE CRUSADER, A CANADIAN REGISTERED BOAT, IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY US CITIZEN DON SORTE. THE YACHT LEFT SRI LANKA ON NOV 9, 1977 WITH SIX PERSONS ABOARD: THREE BRITISH CITIZENS (TWO WOMEN AND ONE MAN); ONE AUSTRALIAN; AND, TWO AMERICANS (SORTE AND ONE OTHER).

3. ACCORDING TO MCDONALD AN AIR SEARCH CONDUCTED BY US FORCES FROM DEC 4-7, 1977 FAILED BECAUSE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THAT TIME REGARDING THE POSSIBLE POSITION OF THE YACHT WAS INACCURATE. MCDONALD CLAIMS TO HAVE LOCATED A "HAM RADIO OPERATOR" WHO WAS IN CONTACT WITH THE YACHT NOV 16, 1977 AND WHO RECORDED THE CRUSADER'S LOCATION AT LAT. 0624N/8852E. THIS POSITION IS ON EDGE OF AREA SEARCHED IN DEC AND
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PAGE 02 CANBER 00751 010525Z

MCDONALD FEELS YACHT WOULD HAVE MOVED IN INTERVENING THREE WEEKS.

4. BASED ON THE NOV 16 POSITION OF THE YACHT, MCDONALD FEELS THAT BOAT WOULD HAVE HEADED FOR NEAREST LAND, I.E. THE NICOBAR ISLANDS. HE IS AT PRESENT TRYING TO OBTAIN PERMISSION FROM INDIA TO CONDUCT A PRIVATE SEARCH OF THESE

ISLANDS BUT ALSO IS ENDEAVOURING TO GENERATE INTEREST IN A
FURTHER AIR SEARCH.

5. MCDONALD WAS ADVISED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT A NEW
AIR SEARCH WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AT THIS LATE DATE BUT THAT WE
WOULD SURVEY OUT POSTS IN THE AREA FOR CURRENT INFORMATION.

6. IF ADDRESSEES HAVE ANY NEWS RE CRUSADER OR PASSENGERS
PLEASE ADVISE.
ALSTON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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TAGS: CASC, AS, US, (MCDONALD, ROBERT)
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